

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 MCT-01 CU-02 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01

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P R 202132Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5365

INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 5146

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PE, SHUM

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON POLITICAL DISTURBANCES

REF: LIMA 5109

SUMMARY: THE WEEKEND OF JUNE 18-91 WAS MARKED BY MILITARY-ENFORCED ORDER IN CUZCO AIDED BY A PARTIAL ROLLBACK OF BUS FARE INCREASES, A LATE NIGHT BOMBING OF ACCION POPULAR PARTY HEADQUARTERS IN LIMA, AND A JUMP IN BASIC FOOD PRICES. SOME ADVERSE PUBLIC REACTION TO HIGHER FOOD PRICES IS EXPECTED, AND THE BOMBING INCIDENT (THE SECOND IN A WEEK) MAY SIGNAL A RISE IN THE KIND OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY DIRECTED THUS FAR AT PROPERTY AND NOT PERSONS. END SUMMARY.

1. SERIOUS MIDWEEK STUDENT-LED DISTURBANCES IN CUZCO WERE CONTROLLED BY WEEK'S END WITH A 9:00 P.M. TO 5:00 A.M. CURFEW, THE ARRIVAL OF SPECIAL ARMY TROOPS FROM AREQUIPA, AND A PARTIAL ROLL-BACK OF BUS FARES IN CUZCO. THE MOSCOW-LINE CGTP LABOR CONFEDERATION ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE CLAIMING THAT ALL "SOCIAL FORCES" INCLUDING THE CGTP CUZCO DEPARTMENTAL FEDERATION, HAD DECLARED A 72 HOUR GENERAL STRIKE BEGINNING JUNE 16.

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THE CGTP ALLUDED TO SERIOUS INJURIES OR DEATHS IN ITS COMMENT THAT "GRAVE AND SORROWFUL CONSEQUENCES" RESULTED FROM "DRASTIC AND REPRESSIVE MEASURES AGAINST THE WORKERS AND PEOPLE." EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR ITS CUZCO FEDERATION, THE CGTP SOMWHAT CAUTIOUSLY CALLED FOR GOP "FLEXIBILITY AND MATURITY" IN HANDLING THE CRISIS THERE AND DEMANDED AN INVESTIGATION TO FIX RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT ACTION.

2. NEITHER THE GOP (REFTTEL) NOR THE CGTP VERSION OF EVENTS WAS FULLY ACCURATE. THE STRIKE CALLED WAS ONLY PARTIALLY HONORED BY MERCHANTS AND OTHERS (HOTELS AND SHOPS REMAINED OPENED TO TOURISTS), ALTHOUGH THE MACHU PICCHU TOURIST TRAIN DID NOT RUN ONE DAY, AND BANK WORKERS STRUCK FOR A FEW HOURS THURSDAY AND FRIDAY. RUMORS OF INJURY AND DEATHS PERSIST BUT REMAIN UNCONFIRMED. A HIGH LEVEL FONMIN OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF JUNE 18 THAT THE GOP NOW FEARS FAR LEFT SABOTAGE ATTEMPTS AGAINST CUZCO WATER AND ELECTRIC INSTALLATIONS. FOR THIS REASON SPECIAL ARMY UNITS HAVE MOVED IN TO PROTECT KEY FACILITIES. BECAUSE OF LAST WEEK'S DISTURBANCE THE JUNE 24 CUZCO/MACHU PICCHU INCA SUN FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN POSTPONED.

3. ISOLATED WEEKEND DISTURBANCES ASSOCIATED WITH ECONOMIC MEASURES WERE REPORTED IN PUNO AND TRUJILLO. A STUDENT CLASH WITH POLICE LATE FRIDAY IN THE RIMAC AREA OF LIMA (NEAR DWOTOWN) PRODUCED SOME PROPERTY DAMAGE, NUMEROUS ARRESTS AND ALLEGED STUDENT INJURIES. AREQUIPA REMAINED CALM BUT SECURITY FORCES WERE ON ALERT. THE GOP FEARS POSSIBLE STRIKE ACTIVITY DURING THE COMING WEEK, BUT BANK WORKERS AND OTHERS MAY NOT RISK A CERTAIN GOVERNMENT CRACK-DOWN. LEADERS OF THE FAR LEFT TEACHERS' UNION (SUTEP) ARE BEING SOUGHT BY POLICE FOR THE CRIME OF "CONTEMPT FOR THE ARMED FORCES" PERPETRATED IN A WRITTEN SUTEP STATEMENT. THE GOP PROBABLY HOPES THAT PURSUIT AND/OR ARREST OF TEACHERS' CONFIDENTIAL

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UNION LEADERS WILL KEEP THE UNION, WHICH IS ATTEMPTING TO ORGANIZE A GENERAL STRIKE, OFF BALANCE.

4. A DYNAMITE BLAST IN THE EARLY HOURS OF JUNE 18 DESTROYED THE ENTRANCE AND MEETING ROOM OF THE ACCION POPULAR (THE PARTY OF FORMER PRESIDENT BELAUNDE) MIRAFLORES HEADQUARTERS. WINDOWS IN NEARBY APARTMENT BUILDINGS WERE SHATTERED AND A BUILDING WATCHMAN WAS HOSPITALIZED FOR SHOCK. FORMER PRESIDENT BELAUNDE ISSUED A STATEMENT CONDEMNING THE TERRORIST ACT AS "STUPID AND COWARDLY" (HE ALSO VERBALLY BLASTED THE VELASCO REGIME BUT NOT THE CURRENT GOP). "ANONYMOUS ENEMIES WILL NOT HALT THE RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT" TO BE ACHIEVED "WHATEVER THE COST." BELAUNDE, ENCOURAGED BY AN ALMOST TRIUMPHANT JUNE 3 RECEPTION IN AREQUIPA AND OTHER SPONTANEOUS POPULAR ACCLAMATIONS IN SMALLER TOWNS, PLANS TO CONTINUE SPEAKING OUT. ANOTHER BOMB EXPLODED HARMLESSLY ON A LIMA STREET JUNE 19.

5. OFFICIAL PRICES OF RICE, BREAD, PASTA AND OTHER BASIC FOODSTUFFS ROSE SHARPLY JUNE 18. ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MEDIA, THE PRODUCTS ON HAND WERE STILL BEING SOLD AT OLD PRICES, HOWEVER, IN THE SLUM TOWNS, AT LEAST, THERE WAS

EVIDENCE THAT MERCHANTS WERE GOUGING SHOPPERS FOR FAR MORE THAN THE NEW OFFICIAL PRICES. A GOP OFFICIAL TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ATTEMPT TO MEET THIS PROBLEM BY SELLING BASIC FOODS IN SLUM AREAS AT OFFICIAL PRICES AND DIRECTLY FROM GOVERNMENT-OWNED SUPERMARKET TRUCKS.

5. COMMENT: THE POLICE AND MILITARY WILL MAINTAIN A STATE OF ALERT FOR SOME TIME IN ORDER TO HANDLE POSSIBLE DISORDERS. THE MEMORY OF FEBRUARY 5, 1975, WITH ITS BREAKDOWN IN PUBLIC ORDER, IS STILL FRESH HERE. THE BOMBING OF ACCION POPULAR HEADQUARTERS JUNE 18, FOLLOWING THE JUNE 14 BOMBING OF THE BANK WORKERS FEDERATION MAY PRESAGE A RISE IN THIS KIND OF SPORADIC TERRORIST ACTIVITY, ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL.

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